BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08631 764 9

No. 7568.192.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
OMNIVM
LVX
CIVIVM
OF THE CITY OF
BOSTON
1852 1878

Ann 7568.7
Dec. 13 1826
2
BL 26 M6

"Masonry the same all over the world."

ANOTHER MASONIC MURDER.

*7568.192
(anderton) Sam. G.

On Monday last, Mr. Samuel G. Anderton, of Boston, a Knight Templar, voluntarily appeared before a Notary Public and Justice of the Peace in this City, and in presence of several members of the State Committee and other Citizens assembled, made solemn oath to the following statement—disclosing a most *barbarous* MURDER, of which he was an eye witness, *in a* Royal Arch Chapter of Free Masons! Immediately on the receipt of this document, several members of the Investigating Committee in Boston, to whom he was less known, took measures more fully to inquire, and satisfy themselves as to the character of Mr. Anderton, and particularly as to such *facts, stated* by him, which might be known here. They found upon inquiry, a mass of evidence in support of his testimony, as,

1st. That the character of Mr. Samuel G. Anderton, for truth *and* veracity, *is and ever has been without a stain.*

2d. That Mr. Anderton is a man to be trusted, punctual and honest in his dealings, and that his neighbors, and all, who best know him, prefer sending their adventures by "Uncle Sam,"—a familiar title by which he is known, rather than by any one else.

3d. That he naturally possesses a great memory—a sound mind, and many other estimable qualifications. That all the events of his life, so far as they relate to Boston, Salem, Marblehead, and Charlestown, are found to be correct. His name is on the books at the Custom Houses, the different ships and vessels, *in which he sailed*, are well known to many of our merchants, his good character is attested by masters of vessels, &c.

4th. That a man from Belfast is now in this City, who was once a member of the "New Blue, No. 272," and corroborates many other important facts, of which more hereafter.

5th. That Mr. Anderton said more than a year ago, *he saw something* in a Lodge room *once*, which induced him, on going to sea soon after, *to throw his apron and all his masonic certificates* overboard; but that he could not be persuaded then to tell what it was.

6th. That the reason of Mr. Anderton's making these disclosures at this time, was the frequent conversations and disputes about the

the late mysterious death of Mr. Artemas Kennedy. He said, "he could not keep a secret any longer, which had been a burden to him for seventeen years. That the public ought to know the nature of the Masonic Institution, and that he was desirous of making oath to what he saw himself."

Should any person be disposed to say, that the *barbarity* of the transaction *is too bad to be believed,* let them remember that the same was said in the case of Capt. William Morgan, "*that high and honorable men could not be guilty of such cruelty, injustice, and murder.*" But it is proved that those men did do it. And could Morgan return, to tell the story of his sufferings, or should the heart of some one be softened, who witnessed, and he induced to describe all the particulars of the bloody tragedy at Niagara, it might exhibit a scene quite as appalling to the best sympathies of our nature, as the one here disclosed.

AFFIDAVIT.

I, Samuel G. Anderton, of the City of Boston, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, of lawful age, do testify and say,—

That I was told by my parents, that I was born in the town of Marblehead on the 13th of February, 1780. My father's name was Thomas Anderton, of that place—a seafaring man; and my mother's maiden name was Mary Meaks. Their grave-stones are now, in what is called the old hill burying ground in Marblehead. At the same place are buried one sister, one brother, two wives and one child of mine. When a boy, I attended the common schools of Marblehead. Among the teachers, were Mrs. Curtis, Master Roundy, (who had but one arm) and Master Bond. The Hon. Joseph Story, now one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, was sometime one of my school fellows.

I was afterwards put apprentice to Mr. Samuel Newhall, to learn the trade of a cooper. But in consequence of his failing in business, I was sent to sea, a little before I was eighteen years of age.

My first voyage was in the brig George, Christopher Grant, Master. We sailed from Boston, and took in a load of lumber at Penobscot River for Martinico—but was taken by the French, and carried to Point Peter, Gaudaloupe—put on board a prison ship, confined about seven weeks—taken out to be sent to St. Thomas, but was taken on the passage and carried to Nevis, where I took passage in the boat to St. Kitts, and there entered as a seaman, to work my passage, on board the brig called the George, Captain Tibbets, bound to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and soon after returned home.

From that time to the present, I have followed a seafaring life—have made many voyages, unnecessary to enumerate in detail. When in the fishing business, I have usually sailed from Marblehead, and when in the merchant service *generally* from Boston. In both these places I am well known, and the instances are but few,

where I have been engaged to commence a voyage from other ports, which I will here mention.

I made three voyages from Wiscasset, after the embargo was raised in 1809.—The first, in the ship Mount Vernon, owned by Abiel Wood—Capt. Stevens, Master. I sailed as Chief Mate, with timber, bound to Liverpool, and returned with salt. Next, in the ship Union, Capt. Mc Cowen; and next, in the ship Columbus, with Capt. Stevens, I sailed as Chief Mate, loaded with timber, bound to Belfast, in Ireland. The timber was discharged opposite to Carrickfergus Castle, Whitehouse Roads. We were in port, I think, about seven weeks. While there, I became acquainted with several persons, who were Free Masons; and from their representations of Masonry, I was induced to offer myself a candidate to a Lodge, called the New blue, No. 272. The first night I attended, I was initiated an Entered Apprentice—passed to the degree of Fellow Craft, and raised to what they called the Sublime degree of Master Mason.

I attended the Lodge several evenings afterwards, and became acquainted with a number of Masons; among these was one by the name of WILLIAM MILLER. He was a miller by trade, a man of considerable intelligence, and fond of inquiring and talking about the liberties of my country. He invited me to call on him, which I did, sometimes at his mill, where he worked, and once took supper with him at his house. I likewise became some acquainted with a friend of his, another Mason, by the name of James Kennedy. We used to be in and out at the tavern, then kept by Christopher Greenlow, below the Lodge room in the same building where the Masons met. The Lodge I think met in the third story. The building was situated on a wharf near the end of Lime-kiln Dock.

At Belfast, we took on board one hundred and thirty-five passengers, and sailed for Perth Amboy, in New Jersey, where they were discharged. My next voyage was in the ship Frances Henrietta, owned in New York, Capt. Joseph Skinner, Jr. Master. I sailed as Chief Mate, bound to Lisbon, with a cargo of corn and flour, which was delivered to Sam Poio, (I am not sure this name is spelt right,) an agent for Wellington's army. We returned to New York with salt, which was afterwards delivered as I was told, at Hudson. But I was discharged at New York on my own request, and returned to my family at Marblehead, with a view of moving to New York. But the war taking place soon after, in 1812, I sailed as first prize Master, in the ship Catharine, armed as a letter of Marque, 14 guns, owned by William Gray, Esq. on a cruise—Francis Burnham, Master, was taken by the Calabria Brig of 18 guns—carried to Halifax and imprisoned in Melville Island prison. I was then released on parole, and returned to Boston in the ship Fawn, Capt. Thomas Harris, of Charlestown, and then went to my family at Marblehead.

My next cruise was on board the schooner Sword Fish, Capt. Evans, of Salem, in the capacity of Prize Master,—were captured

27 days out, by the Elephant seventy-four, and the Hermes sloop of war—taken to Portsmouth, in England, three days after—put on board the St. Antonio prison ship some time; then sent to Chatham, and confined in the prison ship Glory. While here, I kept a little sutler's shop at some profit, and had money. The officer in command was a Mason, and as such I made myself known to him. One evening he ordered me ashore, and as I passed him, he put a guinea in my hand and said, "Anderton, do the best you can." I readily understood his meaning, thanked him, and made my escape. After some time, I found an opportunity to work my passage to Ireland, this was in the spring of 1813. I went to Belfast; called on my old acquaintances, and some of them spoke very highly in favor of the upper degrees of Masonry. This excited my curiosity; and I was induced, by the representations of the great advantage, as well as knowledge to be derived from them, to offer myself again as a candidate. I found that William Miller had become a Royal Arch; and I believe James Kennedy was a Knight Templar. I recollect, that on the 4th of June, which was the King's birth day, I conversed with Miller on the subject. He told me, "the Masons had offered to make him a Knight Templar free of expense, and that Kennedy had urged him very strongly to attend *that* evening," which, he said, "to please him, (Kennedy,) he had agreed to do." I thought he spoke rather coldly upon the subject, and said nothing in favor of the institution. However, as I had agreed to go, I went. The whole number of Masons there, of all degrees, was seventy-one, or seventy-two. That night, I took the degrees of Arch, Royal Arch, and Knight Templar. The number of Knight Templars in the Encampment, was about a dozen. I have since heard of the degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, and Most Excellent Master: But I heard nothing said about such degrees there.

Soon after I was dubbed a Knight Templar, and during the same evening I was told that a mason would be there, who had violated his obligations, by saying that Jachin and Boaz was a true Book, and something else, they said, he had done about that book, or told about Masonry, that I cannot distinctly recollect. They said he had broken his oaths—called him a damned perjured wretch—said that he had forfeited his life and ought not to live any longer among men or masons, and so on—and appeared in great rage. The number of masons then present in the Chapter, I should think was from thirty-five to forty, who had taken the Royal Arch and Knight Templar degrees.

I should have been very glad to have cleared out and left the room, could I have been indulged that privilege. But was told, "that is never allowed on such occasions." We were ordered to cast lots to see who should officiate as Executioners. The names of all present were put into an Urn, and what were called blanks and prizes put in another Urn. I have since had suspicions that some unfairness was used in this drawing; for it was so managed that the lot fell on three foreigners—that is, on one Swede,

one Dane, and myself!! The Swede and Dane were both strong athletic men, masters of vessels, and strangers to me. I cannot say which was drawn first, next, or last, for I was struck with horror and astonishment that I cannot describe. My life has often been exposed to great peril and danger. I have been twice shipwrecked and several times met the enemies of my country in bloody combat, amidst the roar of cannon and the groans of dying men. But I can truly say that I never felt as at that moment. Amidst all my other dangers, I felt that I was doing my duty; but this I considered would be murder in cold blood. I had found by the conversation, that the man, who was there to suffer death, was the same William Miller before mentioned. I told them I could not do it. I begged and entreated; told them I had as lief have my own throat cut as commit such an act. My feelings were so distressed, and I expressed myself in such a manner, that after some time, I was excused. The Swede and Dane, according to my best remembrance, did not objcct. Several others said "they would help execute any one who broke his obligations; that every mason ought to help do it," or words to that effect.

They had a canvass cloth cap or bag to put over his head and come down a little below the chin, rigged with small ropes, or strong cords, fixed in the lower part of it, so as to slip easily, that when the cap was on, and the cords drawn each way, right and left, the cap would be gathered tight under his chin, so as to shut his mouth, and at the same time, draw so close round his neck and throat as to strangle him.

It was now at the black hour of midnight. The Executioners took their station a little to the left of the High Priest (or Grand Master who presided.) Mr. Miller was then led into the room, somewhat in the condition that candidates usually are. He was hoodwinked—his coat off, but so far as I recollect, he was not divested of his other garments. Mr. Miller was, no doubt, decoyed in by the promise of being made a Knight Templar, *free of expense*, and under the mask of friendship; poor fellow! he little thought what was in preparation for him.

He was led along slowly from the west up near his Executioners, when some one said, "Who comes there! who comes there!!" the answer was bawled out, as they seized him, "a damned traitor, who has broken his masonic obligations!" with that he exclaimed, "O my God! are you going to murder me! O! my wife! my children!!" The agony, the strong struggle, and the half smothered utterance of these words, and the final shriek! as the cap went over his head and face, pierced me to the heart, and was enough, as I should think, to have softened the hearts of savages, if they had not taken masonic oaths. Those horrid sounds of the tortured victim seem still to ring in mine ears. No sooner was the murderous cap down over his face, and his whole head enveloped, than, at the same instant, the Swede and Dane appeared to spring with all their might and strength, drawing each, in opposite directions, by the ropes or

cords around his neck! Poor Miller, after the most frantic struggles, like a person in a fit, then settled down to the floor in the most dreadful convulsions. Other masons fell on him, while the Swede and Dane, bracing their feet against his body, still pulled by the cords! there, while struggling on the floor, they cut his throat! and then his left side and breast open, so as to show his heart!! Some, very few masons present, seemed by their looks, to express some sympathy and compassion; while the rest using the most profane, revengeful language, with their fists clenched, girnned with horrid approbation! The body was then carried down stairs, while several masons kept watch for fear of detection, and thrown over into Lime Kiln Dock!!—I got away from this scene of Masonic murder, as soon as possible, with the most awful impressions.

Before I left Belfast, I heard by common report, that the body was taken up the next day, and that a coroner's inquest decided that *WILLIAM MILLER was Murdered by persons unknown*; or something to that effect. I left Belfast in a Russian ship, called the Oflen, in ballast for New Bedford. The next day after we got to sea, I threw my apron and masonic papers overboard. Arrived in port, and returned to my family at Marblehead. I next joined the Constitution, under Commodore Stuart; was in the U. Service until Sept. after the Peace, in 1815. I moved to Boston soon after and have followed my business to this time; and further I say not.

SAMUEL G. ANDERTON.

Boston, March 15th, 1830.

United States of America.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

SUFFOLK, ss.

City of Boston. On this 15th day of March, 1830, personally appeared before me John W. Quincy, a Notary Public and Justice of the Peace, duly commissioned and sworn, and dwelling in Boston, the above named Samuel G. Anderton, and after being duly cautioned and sworn, made oath that the above declaration by him subscribed is true. In testimony whereof I, the said Notary Public, have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of Office on the day aforesaid.

(L.S.)

JOHN W. QUINCY,

Notary Public and Justice of the Peace.

———ooo———

The special committee appointed at a numerous convention of the County and Ward committees from all parts of the city of Boston, and other citizens assembled at Merchants' Hall, on the 18th March inst. for the purpose of investigating more particularly the facts, in connexion with the disclosures made under oath by our fellow citizen—Mr. Samuel G. Anderton, have attended to the duties assigned them, and ask leave respectfully to—

REPORT.

That they find Mr. SAMUEL G. ANDERTON to be a man well known to many of our merchants and other citizens: and so far as your committee have yet been able to ascertain, his character for truth and veracity is good, and beyond any doubt or dispute.

Your committee have not arrived at this conclusion without research and careful inquiry. They have examined a respectable number of recommendatory certificates in his favor—given by persons of known character and integrity, at different periods of his life and on various occasions. They have visited that part of the city of Boston in which he lives—inquired among his neighbors of respectability, and of those who for many years have intimately known him. But after all, they have been unable to find any thing to impeach the credibility of his testimony.

Your committee therefore are unanimous in the belief, that Mr. Samuel G. Anderton

possesses a sound mind—a retentive memory—and that his character for truth and veracity are such as to render his testimony worthy, fully to be believed.

Your committee take the liberty, however, to mention one or two other important considerations, in support of Mr. Anderton's disclosure. The first arises from the nature of the Masonic Institution. It will be seen that his deposition publicly and voluntarily given, signed and sworn to on the 15th inst. before the proper magistrate—a Notary Public and Justice of the Peace, well known in Boston—exhibits a most atrocious murder! a murder in cool blood! and a murder committed by a Royal Arch Chapter of from 35 to 40 Free Masons! This, it must be confessed, is agreeable to the oaths and obligations of Free Masonry.

The second consideration is from what has been done by the fraternity. It is well known by undoubted evidence, now before the world, that if William Miller was murdered, as Mr. Anderton has testified, that he is not the only Freemason who has suffered the bloody penalties of his obligations! The institution of Freemasonry is not merely suspected; for, without the testimony of Mr. Anderton, who was an eye witness, it has been proved to be guilty. Other strong circumstances might be mentioned. But your committee forbear, lest their publicity at this time might prove prejudicial to further investigation.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JACOB HALL,
BENJ. W. LAMB,
ISAAC PORTER,
} *Special Committee.*

City of Boston, March 23, 1830.

———ooo———

Boston, April 5, 1830

The Special Committee appointed for the purpose of investigating more particulary the facts, in connexion with the disclosures made under oath by Mr. SAMUEL G. ANDERTON, ask leave respectfully to present the following additional

REPORT.

That they have, within a few days past, seen and conversed with several persons of respectability, in the City of Boston, from Belfast, Ireland, who voluntarily state, in writing, to your committee, that they well recollect the *fact of* MR. WILLIAM MILLER'S *murder*—that he was a miller by trade—that his body was taken out of Lime-kiln Dock—that it lay on the wharf in the afternoon of the 5th of June, 1813. They state names, reasons, circumstances, &c. They express a readiness to testify that they saw the body themselves, and that hundreds of others saw it—that Mr. Miller was a respectable citizen, and that his death produced considerable excitement. They well recollect that it was reported in Belfast at the time, that Mrs. Miller said her husband prepared to go to the Lodge the evening before, and as she supposed, went—and also that Christopher Greenlow, or as two of the witnesses call him, Christopher Greenwood, who kept the public house on the wharf at Lime-kiln Dock, said that "*Miller came into his house the evening before, and went out again.*" This man they say was a mason—that the Lodge room was in the third story, and they all agree as to the description of the place. One man says he recollects seeing in a Belfast newspaper the account published, headed "ANOTHER MURDER," in large letters. They further say that several persons were taken up and imprisoned on suspicion, but were afterwards released for want of proof.

Your committee have full confidence in the statements of these persons. They have a good character for truth and veracity, so far as they have yet been able to ascertain: and your committee consider the testimony given by Mr. SAMUEL G. ANDERTON, corroborated and confirmed in such a manner as to leave no doubt as to its truth.

Your committee further REPORT, that as this subject is understood to be in a train to undergo a judicial investigation, they deem it inexpedient, *at this time*, to give the names of the persons who have furnished the above information, to the public.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JACOB HALL,
BENJ. W. LAMB,
ISAAC PORTER,
} *Special Committee.*

EXTRACTS

From some Masonic Obligations, containing the Penal Sanctions.

In order to have a fair view of the barbarous and sanguinary nature of Freemasonry, it may not be improper to recapitulate some of the penalties. The Entered Apprentice 'binds himself under no less penalty than to have his throat cut across, his tongue torn out by the roots, and his body buried

in the rough sands of the sea.' The penalty of the Fellow Craft, is, 'to have his left breast torn open, and his heart and vitals taken from thence, to be thrown over his left shoulder, and carried into the valley of Jehoshaphat.' The Master Mason swears under the penalty of 'having his body severed in two, his bowels burnt to ashes, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven.' The candidate for the fourth degree, 'binds himself under no less penalty, than to have his right ear smote off, and his right hand chopped off as the penalty of an impostor.' The Past Master swears under the penalty of having his "tongue split from tip to root." The Most Excellent Master binds himself under the penalty of having his "breast torn open, and his heart and vitals taken from thence, and exposed to rot on the dung hill." The Royal Arch Mason imprecates the penalty of having his "skull smote off, and his brains exposed to the scorching rays of the sun."

Such, fellow-citizens, are the sanguinary penalties, by which the Masonic code is sanctioned, up to the seventh degree. Those of the higher degrees, are of the same nature, except, that if possible, they increase in barbarism.

Now it is vain for Masons any longer to deny, that these are the penalties by which the laws of their institution are enforced; because those obligations have already become the subject of judicial record, as developed, under oath, in courts of justice.

It is equally vain for them to pretend, that these penalties have received only a *passive* signification. The obligations speak for themselves. No person can read them, with an unprejudiced mind, without receiving the strong, immediate and horrid impression, that they were intended to be put in execution. Some of us, likewise, *know*, from our own observation, that these obligations have been uniformly administered in lodges and chapters, and suffered to stand, as *literally expressed*, without note or comment. The candidate is made to bind himself "*under no less penalty*," than to suffer thus and so, if he "should prove *wilfully guilty* of violating any part of his obligation." But what is a penalty? Johnson says, it is a "*punishment*;" "*judicial infliction*," "*forfeiture upon non performance*." It is a contradiction in terms, then, to say, that a *penalty* is merely *passive*. The delinquent also, in the terms expressed, is supposed to prove "*wilfully guilty*" of violating some part of his obligation; which could not be the case, if the secrets of Masonry were *extorted* from him by persecution. The very terms therefore, "*wilfully guilty*," as expressed in the oath, are a fair exposition of the penalty, and show at once, that it was intended to be put in execution, in case of delinquency. The candidate also, is made to swear, that he "will obey all regular signs, summonses, or tokens, given, handed, sent, or thrown" to him, from a brother, or companion of the same degree, or from "the body of a lawfully constituted Lodge," or "Chapter of such." This part of the oath too, is left without note or comment. The candidate is to "obey *all* regular signs, summonses, or tokens," whether to be tried and condemned himself, or to try and execute a brother, who may have violated his Masonic engagements. This precisely accords with the charge given to the Fellow Craft, as expressed in Webb's Monitor: "our laws and regulations you are strenuously to support; *and be always ready to assist in seeing them duly executed.*"

But, if we had any doubt respecting the design, nature and tendency, of Masonic laws; we have a fair and direct exposition in the higher degrees. The "Thrice Illustrious Knight" is sworn in the following words: "You further swear, that should you know another violate any essential part of this obligation, you will use your most decided endeavors, by the blessing of God, *to bring such person to the strictest and most condign punishment*, agreeably to the rules and usages of our ancient fraternity." The Elected Knight of Nine, swears, that he "*will revenge* the assassination of our worthy Master, Hiram Abiff, not only on the murderers, but also *on all, who may betray the secrets of this degree.*" He also consents, in case of his own delinquency, "*to be struck with the dreadful poignard of vengeance.*" The Illustrious Elector of Fifteen binds himself under the penalty of having his "body opened perpendicularly and horizontally, and exposed to the air for eight hours, that the flies may prey on the entrails;" and swears "to be ready to inflict the same penalty on all who may disclose the secrets of this degree." The Knight of the East and West binds himself "under the penalty of not only being dishonored, but to consider his life as the immediate forfeiture, and that to be taken from him with all the tortures and pains to be inflicted in manner as he had consented to his preceding degrees." The "Knight of the Eagle, and Sovereign Prince of Rose Croix De Heroden," is shown a symbolic representation of *Hell*, and then addressed in the following language: "The horrors which you have just now seen, are but a faint representation of those you shall suffer, if you break through our laws, or infringe the obligation you have taken." To the Knight of the Eagle or Sun, is explained the following emblem: "By the man you saw peeping, and who was discovered, seized, and conducted to death, is an emblem of those who came to be initiated in to our secret mysteries through a motive of curiosity, and, if so indiscreet as to divulge our obligation, *we are bound to cause their death, and take vengeance on the treason, by the destruction of the traitor.*" In accordance with this sentiment, the Knight of Kadosh swears "to take revenge on the traitors of Masonry," and to yield *submission and obedience, on all occasions, without any restrictions*, to the orders of the Illustrious Knights and Grand Commander."

MR. COLDEN'S LETTER.

At a meeting of citizens, held at No. 66, Nassau Street, on the evening of the 20th instant, Mr. ERASTUS ELLSWORTH was called to the Chair, and C. C. BLATCHLY, chosen Secretary.

On motion of HENRY DANA WARD, Esq. resolved, unanimously, that a committee of three be appointed to address one or more of the most eminent men of this state who are Free Masons, soliciting their opinion upon the general character and tendency of Masonic Societies, accompanied with such explanations and remarks as they may choose to make upon the subject.

Resolved, unanimously, That the Chairman appoint that committee.

Whereupon, Mr. ELLSWORTH appointed Col. RICHARD VARICK, THOMAS FESSENDEN, Esq. and SAMUEL ST. JOHN, Esq. to constitute that committee.

NEW-YORK, April 21st, 1829.

HON. CADWALLADER D. COLDEN,

Sir—The undersigned, the committee appointed in pursuance of the above resolution, recollecting you as a distinguished member of a sagacious and discriminating profession; having reason to remember you with respect and gratitude as Mayor of this city, and as their Legislative Representative at Albany and at Washington; and reposing confidence in you as a MAN; and, being informed, moreover, that you are intimately acquainted with Free Masonry, and have attained to its most elevated degrees, beg leave, in discharge of the trust committed to them, to solicit the communication of your opinion and judgment upon the tendency and effects of that institution, accompanied with such explanations and remarks as you may choose to make upon so interesting a subject. Entertaining opinions unfavorable to Masonic associations, on general principles, with much sincerity, and without a particle of hostility to Masons as individual men, the committee, as well as those they represent, are not only willing but desirous to obtain light and truth upon a question which, at present, so deeply agitates the community, from any quarter, Masonic or otherwise, whence it can be communicated, and from which it may be confidently anticipated, it will come unperverted, as far as it is communicated at all.

With great respect, we are,

Your fellow-citizens, and ob't serv'ts.

RICH'D VARICK,
THOMAS FESSENDEN,
SAM'L ST. JOHN.

MR. COLDEN'S ANSWER.

GENTLEMEN,—I do not think I ought to object to communicate in this manner, the sentiments I have long held, and have frequently expressed, in relation to Free Masonry.

It is true that I have been a Mason a great number of years, and that I have held very high Masonic offices and honors. It is equally true that I have for a long time ceased to have any connexion with the institution, because, I have believed, and do now believe, it is

productive of much more evil than good. It is also true that I have on no fit occasion hesitated to express this sentiment.

I would not do any thing inconsistent with any obligation I may have, however inconsiderately, assumed. But I know nothing of Masonry to render it so horrible as it would be in my estimation, if it obliged me to be silent when I thought its influences were pernicious. It would be detestable if it did not leave me at liberty to warn others from following my example in becoming a member of an institution, of which from its very nature, I must have been ignorant until I was initiated, and of which, a just estimate can only be formed from experience.

I shall disclose none of the secrets of Masonry, (if it now has any secrets,) nor shall I say any thing inconsistent with what is due to the eminent living, and illustrious dead, whose names are recorded as members of the fraternity. I have had a just pride in being associated with many of these, and now feel that I make a sacrifice in pursuing a course which may separate me from men, for whose pure motives and righteous principles, I shall never cease to entertain the most profound respect.

Discussions and expositions of the principles of Masonry, of its origin, its religion, its morals, and its science, have not been considered as betraying any obligation; but on the contrary, have been sanctioned by the highest Masonic authority. It is true that, till of late, Masonry has always been a theme of panegyric; but if the advocates of the institution are free to speak of its merits, it cannot be a violation of duty in those who hold different opinions, to express them with becoming respect and deference.

I desire that it should be understood, that the sentiments I now entertain on this subject, do not result from the alleged murder of Morgan. It is true this horrible event has induced me to think more, and more seriously, than I should otherwise have done, of the society; but I have long entertained my present opinion, *that a man who would eschew all evil, should not be a Free Mason.* Perhaps I cannot give a stronger evidence that this is not an opinion recently formed than to mention that my son, by my advice, has never joined the fraternity.

I cannot mention the deplorable event to which I have referred, without exculpating, so far as any thing I can say will do it, the Masonic fraternity from any participation in that outrage. For a long time I did not believe that Morgan had been put to death. But I find myself obliged to yield to the force of evidence. I yet entertain the most entire confidence that the fraternity did not participate in this crime. On the contrary, I do not doubt but that all the guilt of that transaction is confined to those infatuated men who assailed and slew him. The rest of the craft, I am entirely convinced, are as innocent of the blood of Morgan as I am. I fully believe that they hold the perpetrators in just abhorrence; they would rejoice if the guilty were discovered, and would aid in bringing the murderers to condign punishment.*

* We very much regret the mistake of Mr. Colden on this subject, for a mistake it certainly is, although easily accounted for. Mr. C. confesses frankly his dislike to the Institution, and his disbelief for some time of the murder of Morgan. Had Mr. C. perused the public documents, he could immediately have had no doubt. The same cause, it seems, has produced a similar effect—that is, a mistake on the part of Mr. C. touching the Institution being not implicated in the gross outrages committed. We will however no farther contradict Mr. C. nor anticipate the public opinion. We ask candid men to examine the public trials; the convictions under them; to consider the perjuries committed by Masons to screen the guilty; to reflect upon the numbers indicted, suspected, and called as evidence,—all Masons, and all aiming at the acquittal of the party tried,—and then say, if only a few were concerned,—or rather to say, if the Institution is not fairly impli-

I do not believe that those who committed this crime, had any intention to take the man's life when they first assailed him. Under the influence of an enthusiasm which the forms and mysteries of Masonry are so likely to excite in weak minds, they thought it would be meritorious to inflict some punishment for what they considered his delinquency. But they proceeded from step to step, until they found they had involved themselves in a responsibility that would be ruinous, if Morgan should be left to call them to account. A frantic interpretation of their Masonic obligations, and their fears, assisted, probably, by coporal stimulants, led them to stain their hands with the blood of their victim.

If these conjectures be well founded, however little they will extenuate the crime of the murderers, the proof of such facts, would exonerate the great body of the craft from any participation in the guilt. But an institution, the forms, or obligations, or mysteries of which, can be so perverted, or so misunderstood, even by the weakest minds, as to induce a belief, that it may be meritorious to murder an apostate brother, no good man, on due consideration and reflection, can think deserving of his countenance and support.

If it be asked, what are the advantages of Masonry? It seems to me the answer may be given in these very few words: It often, by its charity, relieves the distressed. But at what an enormous expence is this charity dispensed? When all the machinery of lodges, grand lodges, chapters, encampments, councils, visiters, &c. &c. is taken into consideration, it must be obvious, that the charitable contributions of Masons are but trifles in comparison with the sums devoted to these objects. It may be doubted, whether all that has ever been applied to the charitable funds of the institution, would equal a hundredth part, perhaps I might say a thousandth part, of what has been expended by Masons, for their temples and their decorations, for personal trappings, for jewelry, for funerals, for processions, for festivals and in the conviviality so inseparable from the meetings of the fraternity.

Let it be admitted, however, that the institution does relieve the poor and distressed to the greatest extent. Are the secrecy and the ceremonies of Masonry necessary for the exercise of any virtue? Is it necessary that any set of men to be charitable, should do their deeds by night, in hidden places? That they should by awful ceremonies, establish a relationship among themselves, which many of them believe imposes duties and obligations in reference to each other different from those by which they are bound to the rest of mankind? Many of the fraternity feel themselves obliged, in whatever situation they may be placed, to suffer an appeal from a brother mason to have an influence.—Offenders have persuaded themselves they could claim an exemption from punishment as Masons; and even at the bar of a court of justice, a criminal has thought he secured impunity by revealing to the judge, who was about to pronounce his sentence, their Masonic relationship.

If Masonry separates the members of the craft from their fellow citizens; if Masons are led to believe that their duty towards each other is different from what it is to the members of the community not connected with them; if a Mason is bound to shield another from the

---

cated in the guilt of Morgan's abduction and murder;—for if the crimes for which they were convicted had not been approved by the Institution, how comes it that all those convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for their crimes, should not have been expelled from Lodges? that on the contrary, so far from being expelled, they have been exalted in the Lodges, nourished, cherished, and rewarded, and even with money, as brethren suffering in a righteous *masonic* cause, although gross violators of the laws of their country? The suggestions we make and submit them to the judgment of an impartial public, as well as to Mr. Colden himself.

general operation of the laws, or if he be subjected to any penalties beyond those denounced by the legislature; nay, if even a feeble minded man is made to believe that by becoming a Mason, be enlists in an isolated corps, the members of which may claim privileges through their brethren, and must perform duties which do not belong to other citizens, it cannot be a fit institution in our country, where no man in the discharge of his duties to the community, should act from fear, favor, or affection.

It is often alleged that Masonry engenders and cherishes the social affections, by bringing men together with kindly feelings towards each other. It is not to be doubted but that a well regulated social intercourse has a beneficial influence on the disposition and character of mankind. But again, it must be asked, why is the secrecy, the parade, and the obligations of Masonry necessary, if their objects be so virtuous? It is to be feared, however, that these meetings have not always a happy influence. Admitting that the utmost decorum and propriety are observed, while a lodge is open, yet the craft seldom separate without refreshment; and it often happens that more is taken than is necessary to repair the exhaustion of their labors, and too frequently, more than is consistent with temperance.

Attendance upon lodges sometimes leads to habits which are inimical to the prosperity and happiness of the members and their families. Every meeting of a lodge is attended by visitors, and as there are generally, even in the country several lodges within the compass of ten or twenty miles, opportunities for these visitations frequently occur. Often the habit of making them renders a man, who would otherwise have been content with his own fireside, impatient at home, and desirous to exchange for the excitement of a Masonic banquet, those enjoyments of his domestic circle with which he would have been perfectly content had it not been for the seductions of the craft.

Did I know of any other advantage than these two, charity and the cultivation of social dispositions, which any rational man at this day, imputes to Masonry, I would not fail to mention it.

But it is to be objected to Masonry, not only that no good comes of it, but that it is productive of positive evils. To some of these I have already adverted, and will notice others which have presented themselves very forcibly to my mind, and I may say, to my conscience.

If Masonry is arrogant and impious in her pretensions, and delusive in her promises, surely she deserves to be discountenanced. If she claim to be co-eval with the world, and to be of Divine origin, when in truth she is but as of yesterday, and springs from the dust of the earth, what obligation can there be that should induce any man to hesitate to speak of her according to her demerits?

That operative or practical Masonry was one of the earliest arts practiced by mankind, is very probable. We may suppose that Masons, as well as other trades, very soon formed themselves into separate societies, and adopted regulations, the better to establish and secure their interests. The employment of Masons naturally brought them, as builders and architects, more than the members of any other trade, in contact with the wealthier and higher orders of society. Men, as distinguished for their science as for their rank, were placed at the head of congregations of operative Masons. It then became an honor to be an associate of these bodies. Members were admitted who were not operatives. These soon changed the nature of the institution by which they had been adopted, or as their term is,

accepted; and, instead of the objects of the assemblies of Masons being operative Masonry, they were converted to lodges of speculative Masons, in which the tools and instruments of the former humble trade were retained to be transmuted into symbols of all the virtues and duties of mankind.

No man, at this day, who has taken the least pains to examine the subject, can doubt that this is the origin of Free Masonry, or that the change from operative to speculative Masonry took place in very modern times. The Masonic Society has no more pretence to a Divine origin, than the societies of stationers, butchers, bakers, carpenters, or any other trade. These, for ages, have had, like operative Masons, their assemblies, in which their worshipful masters and wardens have presided; but they have been left in obscurity because their occupations did not bring them in familiar intercourse with men of wealth and power.

The first three degrees of Masonry, when traced back to the actual labors of the craft, may claim some sort of antiquity; but as to all the numerous grades above these, (I think to the number of fifty,) they are of very modern invention, and are but the contrivances of ambitious or artful men to gratify their own vanity, or to obtain money from the vanity and folly of others. They have raked from the bigotry and chivalry of the dark ages of the old world, the names of certain orders, which never had any connexion with ancient Masonry. These modern institutions are no more branches of the Masonic system, than they are of the orders, whose titles they assume.

The pretence that Masons are possessed of any peculiar knowledge, is as fallacious as their claim to a supernatural and anti-deluvian origin. But if they possess all that they pretend to have, of what advantage is it to themselves or to mankind? Suppose some cabalistic words have been preserved and transmitted by Masons through ages, and that the fables they recite were true histories, how would it benefit themselves or their fellow men? The world must again be covered with that darkness which excluded all moral and scientific light, before such knowledge can be of any use even to the possessors.

But it is pretended that lodges are schools of the moral and physical sciences, and instruction in these is promised to those who join the fraternity. I have never heard of any attempt to impart any other moral instruction than that which could be conveyed by precepts like these: That Masons must live within the compass; walk upright as the plumb; must deal on the square, and other such mystical advice. As to the sciences, the whole scope of instruction goes no further than frequently to remind the brethren that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and rules the day, and that the moon rules the night.

That we may be in no danger of violating the secrets of Masonry, of having our judgments biased by the antiquity it claims, or by respect for the many great and good men whose names are on the list of its votaries, let us for a moment put it out of view, and suppose that it were now proposed to establish a society, which, with awful solemnities, and dreadful denunciations, should impose secrecy on its members; that they should separate themselves from the rest of mankind, and establish an intelligence by which they could, under any circumstances, make themselves known to each other; that the duties of the members, in regard to themselves, should be

incompatible with the general order of society; that when a member of the association should make himself known to another, he might look to that other for special favor, whether it was to be dispensed at the polls of an election, from the jury-box, or from the bench. Suppose that the members of this association were bound to screen each other, as far as in their power, from all evil, by concealment; or by more active exertions, to relieve them from all dangers and difficulties, however they might arise from demerit. Let us suppose that all these obligations were to be imposed with awful religious ceremonies, and with sanguinary and horrible penalties, of which each member should consider himself pledged to be the executor. We may suppose this institution to have many grades, and that, at every advance, there are new ceremonies, new oaths, and new penalties, the higher differing from the lowest, only in grossness of absurdity, and impiety of imprecations. That the members of this new institution, decorated themselves with the trappings of royalty, and bestowed on each other sacerdotal, aristocratic, and even royal titles. If such a society were now to be proposed, who would hesitate to say that it would be profane, and inconsistent with our religious, moral, social, and political institutions. One of the most serious objections which might be urged to such an institution, would be its frequent administration of oaths. There would be danger that even these obligations, however solemnly imposed, would become so familiar as to be little regarded; and the simple adjurations of a court of justice, administered with the least possible ceremony, would appear, when compared with the awful ceremonies of the society, to deserve but slight consideration. If the supposed oath imposed obligations which could not be fulfilled without a violation of the duties of a citizen, and indeed without crime, every honest man would shrink from the literal interpretation of it, and would find a refuge in construing it so as to reconcile it to his conscience; rejecting such parts as he did not find acceptable. Oaths, with which there must be so much tampering, could not but have a pernicious effect on society. But these effects would be still more deplorable, were the oaths to be observed according to their letter.

Masonry disclaims all interference in political matters. If, in this country, she has taken any part in the contentions of politicians, it has only been of late. While I was connected with the society, I had every reason to believe that she observed the forbearance she avows. But it must be obvious, that the whole machinery of the institution is peculiarly adapted to political intrigue; and though, in our country, its influence may not have been perceived by any party, yet we see that in a sister republic, so far from its being considered the duty of the fraternity to keep apart from politics, the parties whose dissentions distract the commonwealth, are arranged under different Masonic denominations. Scotch Masons, and York Masons, in that country, no less designate Masons of different sects, than they do partizans of different politics. If lodges may be converted into secret political clubs, they ought to be feared in a free country.

It has often occurred to me as a little extraordinary, that in this republican country of ours, where we claim to be such pure Democrats, there should be manifested in those who become Masons, such a passion for finery, pageantry, dignities, and titles. One who affects to despise the blue or red ribband, the star and garter of an English lord, or the coronet of a foreign prince, clothes himself with

the utmost complacency, in all the colors of the rainbow, and decorates himself with as many jewels and medals, as are worn by an Indian chief. He expects from the fellows of his community, to be addressed by the titles of Worshipful, Most Worshipful, Excellent, Most Excellent, Illustrious, and Most Illustrious, with as much certainty as the greatest despot in the world requires from his slaves a recognition of the rank he assumes. We see from the Masonic notices daily published in our papers, that Knight, Prince, and even King, are familiar titles, by which those to whom they belong are always addressed by their brethren in their assemblies. "To his Most Illustrious Highness, Prince of the Royal Secret of the thirty-third degree," is a title which emblazons the name of many a good republican in this community. Foreigners must think we are not less fond of the show, and trappings, and titles of aristocracy and royalty, than any other people, when they see that we are so eager to adopt them, in the only way tolerated by our political constitutions.

It is true there is something of equality in this, inasmuch as every man, of every grade, and every complexion, may be invested with all the finery, and the magnificent titles of the order. All others, however, are rivalled by the splendor of the Black Lodges of this city, headed by their Respectable and Worshipful Masters.

I have known many persons whose brains have been turned by their elevation from humble occupations to royal titles and imaginary thrones. Indeed, I have never known a very great Mason, who was not a very great fool. I beg to be understood. I do not mean by very great Masons, those who have stood highest in the estimation of the craft, and who have attained the highest Masonic honors. I do not forget that the names of Washington, Clinton, Warren, La Fayette, Franklin, Robert R. Livingston, Jackson, and Marshall, are justly the boast of the fraternity; nor is it possible that I should ever forget that I have seen many venerated Clergymen, sanctifying by their presence and their prayers, the labors, as well as the refreshments of a lodge. But I mean by great Masons, those who are proud of their pompous titles; who are fond of decorations; who persuade themselves that the affairs of the world turn upon Masonry; that without it, society could hardly exist, or if it did, would be deprived of its fairest ornament, and most beneficial arrangement.

It may be asked, how it happens that I should have been so long a Mason and not until this time expressed my disapprobation of the institution. It is true, it is nearly forty years since I became a member of the Masonic fraternity, but I began to question its utility long ago. It must be fifteen or twenty years since I belonged to any lodge, and some eight or ten years that I have not been within the walls of a lodge room. During this time, I have not hesitated to express opinions in accordance with what I have now written.

When I was hardly twenty-one years of age, I was initiated in a lodge in New-York, which was distinguished for the respectability of its members. All of these I knew must have submitted to whatever would be required of me. My confidence, that they would not have done any thing wrong, induced me to pass through the required forms with very little—too little consideration. A like deference for the example of others, led me from step to step, with the same inconsiderateness. It was not till the buoyancy of youth had passed, that I began to see the vanity and folly, and, as I thought, the

evil tendency of Masonry. Morgan's fate has, I acknowledge, strengthened the unfavorable impressions I entertained previously to his murder. Since that event, I have thought the institution not only idle and useless, but this horrible catastrophe has evinced that its mysteries may engender infatuation that will stop at no crime. Since that event, I have believed it would be a relinquishment of a duty I owed to society, if I suffered my respect for those venerated men who have left the world to believe that Masonry was approved by them, prevent me from expressing the convictions of my own mind of its merits. The example of the many who have stood as high in the ranks of Masonry as in the estimation of the world, would have induced me to have buried my own thoughts in silence. I should have been awed by their opinions could I be sure that these patrons, of whom Masonry so justly boasts, deliberately examined the merits of the institution; but when I reflect how many years of my life were passed before I gave the subject due consideration, I cannot but suppose that they, like myself, for a long time, may have been content to rest on the example of their predecessors, and that they have left their successors free to express their opinions. If these are unfavorable to Masonry, no one can say that they are in opposition to what would have been the deliberate judgment of the persons whose great examples are considered of such authority.

I am happy that the letter I have had the honor to receive from you, affords me an opportunity to express, in such a manner as I presume will give them publicity, my sentiments on this subject. I have reason to believe they are in accordance with those of many good and respectable men who are Masons; and who, I hope, will not by their silence, suffer their example in becoming Masons to have an undue influence. I come forward the more readily at this moment, when I think no party or unworthy motive can be imputed to me; when the excitement occasioned by the murder of Morgan, has subsided into a just abhorrence of the guilty; and when the question is not whether every Mason is not a bad man, but whether Masonry is not a bad institution. I believe that it does no good that might not be accomplished by far better means. Its secresy and extensive combinations are dangerous. Its titles and trappings are vain, foolish, and inconsistent with our republican institutions. Its pretensions are absurd, fallacious and impious; and its ceremonies and mysteries are profane, and lead many to believe that they impose obligations paramount to the laws. However limited the influence of my opinions might be, I should be sorry to end my life, leaving it to be believed that I had lived and died the advocate of an institution of which I entertained such views.

Having, agreeably to your request, freely expressed myself on the subject to which your letter refers, I have only to add, Gentlemen, assurances of the respect with which I have the honor to be,

Your Obedient Humble Servant,

CADWALLADER D. COLDEN.

Col. Rich'd Varick,
Samuel St. John, Esq. } Committee, &c.
Thomas Fessenden, Esq.

New-York, May 4, 1829.

EASTBURN, PRINTER, 60 CONGRESS STREET, BOSTON.